

# Fight the good fight (Quality: Good)

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- [ 0 : 00 ]     The first epistle of Paul to Timothy, the last chapter and verse 12.
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- Was now an old man. Timothy was quite young. The apostle says in the next epistle, I have fought a good fight.
- I have kept the faith. It must be very wonderful to come down to the end of life's journey and feel the Holy Spirit has enabled us to fight this good fight as it is called in our text.
- Well, Timothy was starting out as it were in this fight. But Paul calls it the good fight of faith.
- [ 2 : 03 ]     Now we must have enemies if we are engaged in a fight.
- We are reading tonight that wonderful chapter of that great giant who defied the armies of Israel.
- And the Israelites quaked in their shoes and I suppose we should have done. Had we seen him.
- But young David had that wonderful faith given to him. And he remembered how the Lord had delivered him out of the paw of the lion and of the bear.
- And David's faith was so wonderfully strengthened that he could say God would deliver him out of the hand of that uncircumcised Philistine.
- [ 3 : 21 ]     And David went into the fight, trusting in the name of the Lord. And as you have just been singing, the dear Lord ordered that little pebble.
- Just one little bit of Goliath's armour. God didn't, he wasn't covered by it.
- And through that little hole, God directed that stone. And that brought down that mighty giant.
- What a wonder, working God, how God is. And that, without doubt, the psalmist, David, would attribute that wonderful victory not to his sling, not to the stone, but to that wonderful God who was looking on at all things.
- Now when the Holy Spirit, in his love and mercy, makes a sinner feel he or she is a sinner, whether they be boys or girls, or old men and women, there is this fight takes place.
- [ 5 : 04 ]     This conflict begins. And God's dear people, especially in their earlier days, they often fear they will be overcome by all the opposition they meet with.
- The devil tells them, no good praying. You're a sinner. You cannot be saved.
- God is a holy God. Now these poor things, very nearly despair, tempted to believe.
- It's no good praying. Their poor hearts and minds seem dark. And yet, they hope against hope that the dear Lord will have mercy upon them.
- what a mercy if you and I are engaged in this good fight.
- [ 6 : 26 ]     Now speaking naturally of wars, no party is really certain that they will get the victory.

some enemies of this country have had victory, it seemed, in their grasp. But God intervened, caused a wind to blow, their storms to arise.

And that victory they anticipated hasn't come. But as I thought of these words, I thought, here is one fight.

If we are engaged in it, however fearful we may be, however many our enemies may be, where there is the promise of victory.

I like those words in Corinthians. Paul says, But thanks be unto God, which giveth us a victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 7 : 43 ] So those who are engaged in this good fight, they're poor, weak, sinful creatures. naturally they haven't got anything to fight with.

They feel how weak they are. But you see, God gives to them those spiritual weapons of warfare.

And by God's grace, through his grace, these poor sinners, use these weapons, especially prayer.

And the scriptures tell us of wonderful victories that have been gained through the prayers of the Lord's dear people.

When they've been in tight corners, when their cases seem nearly hopeless, yet they've been unable to pray.

[ 8 : 58 ] And the Lord has heard their prayers. And through their prayers, these people have gained some blessed victories.

Look at that night with good Jacob, when Esau was coming to meet him, 400 men with him.

As we should humanly say, he had no opportunity of overcoming, no opportunity of getting the victory.

but he sent over the brook all that he had. He was left alone. And Jacob himself had a blessed victory that night.

And God gave him a wonderful victory over his brother Esau. so that really that night Jacob did fight that good fight of faith.

[ 10 : 13 ] He did lay hold upon eternal life. He wrestled in prayer with the dear Lord and he blessed him there.

And these things are left on record to encourage us to fight the good fight of faith.

We have a very great enemy in self in our own hearts. God's people are not usually long before they learn through grace their greatest enemy is themselves, their own wicked and deceitful hearts.

They find what the apostle says, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death so no one really knows what's going on in the hearts of God's dear people.

But there is a fight against those things they see and feel within.

[ 11 : 49 ] You might say to me tonight, what's the use of my fighting? Is everything wrong in me? nothing right in me? You wouldn't encourage me to hope or fight if you knew me?

You would say that of me? But I tell you what, I have to stand upon this ground that the dear Lord Jesus came into the world not to save good people not to save the righteous but to save sinners and if you can believe that the Lord help you to believe it though you feel a poor wretched sinner that will enable you to fight this good fight of faith some might say I've been trying to fight it but I grow no better I seem to grow worse but God hasn't really promised us the complete victory until we come to the end you know we read in the

Old Testament the Canaanite would dwell in the land Israel tried to get rid of them they were a real trial to the Israelites but they couldn't get rid of them and so it is with God's spiritual Israel they find many things that try them and they wonder if they will ever overcome one of the worst things in us is pride a person needn't be a millionaire to be proud no an old tramp might be far more proud than a person dwelling in a comfortable home you see pride is part of our old nature pride is us in our fallen state it works in a very subtle way but what an enemy to

God's dear people they have a good many trials permitted in their pathway that they may see grace that this enemy may be put down in our time or two in the lives of God's dear people when this enemy is wonderfully subdued when some of us thought we had gained the victory over it over this enemy forever when the dear Lord Jesus comes grants a sweet pardon of sin when the child of God looks for their sins they're all gone when the dear Holy

Spirit instructs them that it was through the precious blood of Jesus through his sufferings upon Calvary's cross through his wonderful death and glorious resurrection that all their sins are forgiven it doesn't seem possible that this enemy will rise up again seems if we've got our foot on its neck but when the blessing is withdrawn when old nature begins to show itself again we find we're not rid of pride yet I remember reading in a book of an old minister he was a very simple old minister there was a godly woman speaking to him one day he was so humble she admired his humility it sparkled

[ 16 : 56 ] I wish mine did for this old man humility sparkled this good woman she says to him I don't suppose you're troubled with pride old friend the old minister says ice stinks on it ice stinks on it ah we may feel the same sometimes got nothing to be proud of everything to be ashamed of yet we stink of pride we wouldn't have it we hate it we sometimes sing the garden is the place where pride there not intrude for should it dare to enter there!

to soon be drowned in blood well we must go on fighting as the Lord strengthens faith until at last we get the complete victory over this terrible thing another very great enemy to Timothy to Paul to all God's people has been unbelief some of you younger ones may have heard the Lord's servant speak of unbelief and havoc that is wrought by like I used to when I was younger wonder whatever this unbelief was they kept speaking about that would be our ruin unless we overcome it

I know what it is now some of you know what it is now hard sometimes to believe that some of us grey headed old sinners will get to heaven and that hard work and why because of this unbelief this spirit of infidelity that is in us by nature what can we do about it nothing in our own strength only as the Lord helps us to fight against it what a fight it is what a giant what a goliath unbelief seems to be to

God's dear people yet there wouldn't be any conflict spiritual conflict we didn't know something of this unbelief our religion would be as cold as ice it would be as smooth as marble were it not for the opposition that we meet with then as we grow older wicked thoughts sinful desires remember in my young days when I just began to learn a little of Romans 7 the world there's no one on earth like me got such a wicked heart as I have got

I went to be a good old minister and he said amongst other things said if you have got the grace of God in your hearts says the laws of common decency wouldn't permit you to utter what you feel within I thought how true a child of God seeking to live sincerely uprightly according to God's word and yet finds so much within really can't believe there's another sinner on earth like they feel to be well that's no mark against you though you may feel like that tonight I would say go on fighting you may feel weak there was a man once looking at a sword a sword which had killed a lot of people and this man looked at this sword well he said

[ 22 : 15 ] I can't see anything wonderful about this sword no the other one said but you should have seen the hand that wielded it that was the secret you see and so spiritually we may feel to be poor weak sinners but if the dear Holy Spirit help us to wield the sword of the Spirit then we shall gain victories over these enemies and these lusts of ours when we are not on our guard when we are not really fighting when things may go a bit easier for us is often the time when the enemy gains advantage over us restraining prayer we cease to fight prayer makes the

Christian's armor bright and Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees you read in the Bible some godly gracious men others were overcome they were not overcome when they were fighting when faith was in exercise it was when perhaps they were negligent when they were careless when they were indifferent well we've got another great enemy in Satan we believe that for God's dear people he is a defeated foe no mark against a poor sinner to feel that opposition from

Satan he worries whom he can't devour perhaps he comes up against you like some goliath you know not what to do you are afraid I shall be overcome by him in the end my friends the dear Lord has overcome him he is really a beaten foe but for reasons I can't explain no one can explain the Lord permits him to worry his dear people he is like the wolf among the sheep sometimes and how the poor sheep of God are hard put to but though he's a great enemy if we can say what

Jesus said when we feel he's seeking to gain the victory over us it is written oh what victories God's dear people have gained over Satan when the dear Lord has blessed his word to them when they've pleaded the merits of the dear Lord Jesus then for the time being have been wonderfully delivered out of the hand of this great enemy fight the good fight of faith lay hold on eternal life there is a will and especially for those of you who are younger there is a will has ever been a great enemy to the dear people of

God to the church of God for the world has grown very subtle you know they're the worst enemies those subtle ones and the world has grown very subtle I was thinking recently the Philistines took the ark of God into their temple and over went their idol God but it's the other way about today the world creeping into their homes people get idols in their homes world creeps in there what happens you cannot serve

[ 27 : 41 ] God and mammon the two can't dwell together and thus their Holy Spirit has largely withdrawn from us and in many cases perhaps instead of fighting against the world!

some whom we hope love and fear God have opened almost our hearts to the world we need to fight against it my friends I have enough of the world in me in my heart without going after it and some of you may feel the same so we need grace day by day to fight against the degen of this world so the apostle encourages young Timothy to fight this good fight he would tell him of those enemies tells him of some outward ones who oppose the truth and it said in the day in which we live there should be those who profess to love and fear

God who really oppose it who are enemies to it who haven't got any real love or regard or esteem for those of the Lord's servants who seek humbly!

to proclaim God's precious truth thus you may have some outward ones or may have had some but it isn't any use our attempting to fight them outwardly quietly by prayer quietly by precious faith to go in secret before the dear Lord and ask him in his love and mercy to overcome these enemies for you well that's fighting the good fight of faith and that's laying hold upon eternal life telling the Lord how much we need him how we need his merciful and gracious strength good old

Latimer one who lived more before the reformation he was preaching a sermon once before the king and he was talking about archers you know what archers are who have their arrows and their bow and the old minister he said the way they train boys to use the bow and arrow was their father would have hold of the bow and arrow and yet it would be in the hands of the son and it would be as if the son shot the arrow but it was really the father whose strength was behind it and whose eye was upon the target and

[ 31 : 52 ] I believe that's just so spiritually it's not you it's not me it isn't our strength that gains a victory over our enemies no it's a dear Lord it's as we are unable to lay hold on eternal life you look what they did in Hebrews 11 they laid hold upon the Lord they had that precious faith they had a good many enemies good many things against them they laid hold upon the Lord he strengthened them some of them they didn't even love their lives unto death they as it were fell in this fight outwardly yet by falling they gained their victory they did indeed and so with us that is our only hope as we are enabled to lay hold upon the Lord you may tell him

Lord I am ignorance I am weakness I am insufficiency I can do nothing without thee what is that laying hold on eternal life seeking God's help seeking God's strength and you may depend upon it we've got to be weakened first our working hand my friends has to be broken our wisdom has to be mauled and we feel what foolish creatures we are then and only then by God's help we lay hold on eternal life David did when he said hold up my goings in thy paths and my footsteps slip not laid hold upon eternal life many have been amazed how the

Lord's dear people have stood how they've come through different trials and through persecutions and tribulations that you may defend that's the secret of real religion by precious faith being unable to lay hold on eternal life we read in the revelation of those who have finished the fight they overcome and they overcame by the blood of the lamb by the word of their testimony be a mercy in the end we are made overcomers we've got one great enemy to face and that is death solemn to think about it but if we have been enabled to fight this good fight of faith to lay hold on eternal life what is death really why it's the last enemy it is true the last enemy that should be destroyed is death and it means this it's the only way to victory you know in

Bunyan's pilgrim's progress there were those who came to the river they said isn't there any other way to the city but through this dark river one told them no only two got into the city any other way they must go that way one poor thing you know began to sink thought he was lost in the end but another said to him brother I feel the bottom and the bottom is good and so they got over some poor things have found this last enemy to be very great very solemn some of the

Lord's people know nothing about it the Lord has taken them suddenly but there's that enemy in front of us each the Lord help us by precious faith to lay hold upon him who is death of deaths and hell's destruction is a wonderful saviour blessed saviour who he can help the feeblest the weakest of his people may he help us each till we come there and help us safely over and safely through and give us a victory over that last enemy the death of Christ was very wonderful I sometimes thought Jesus didn't die weak no we may die weak all our strength may be gone but the dear

[ 38 : 27 ] Lord Jesus died strong he cried with a loud voice it is finished if it was right to say so and I think it is he died a strong death he died a wonderful death he died for a countless number who no man can number took the sting out of death for his people oh death where is thy sting oh grave where is thy victory was a wonderful death and a glorious resurrection and that's the only hope of God's dear people in obtaining this wonderful and blessed victory is worth fighting for poor sinner that you may feel weak and insufficient fight on looking not at self poor weak self but looking unto

Jesus the author and finisher of our faith who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despised the shame set down at the right hand of God amen through